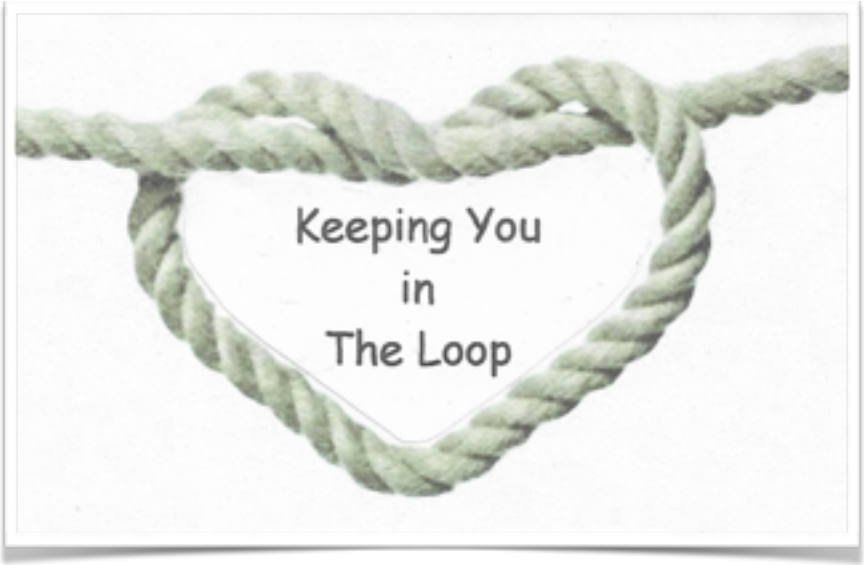
MEDICINE HAT COWBOY POETRY FOUNDATION



Howdy!



If you're thinking to attend our 2026 Western Music and Poetry Round-Up, sorry, but you are too late. It was Friday and Saturday, October 16th and 17th . The Sunday service on the 17th also had a western touch. Our newsletter and the photos will help you see what you missed. You'll watch for another 'round-up' next year, right? Check our website: *MHCowboyLife.com*. We need more people attending in order for us to keep the Cowboy Poetry genre alive with an event. I know that I haven't mentioned everybody that helped make the event a success, but know that your contribution is greatly appreciated.

The internet can be a handy tool to search for information. When I googled 'war heroes', I was delighted to find an interesting story about a Canadian lady I hadn't heard about. Especially during November, we remember those who took part in war, whether it was soldiers on the battle front, those that were assistants like vets, doctors, horses etc. and those left to worry about their loved ones and at home to be part of the war effort there. In our lifetime, Canada has been peaceful compared to other parts of the world. May we keep peace within ourselves, our families and our communities. Lord, give our world leaders the wisdom and ability to successfully negotiate peace.

Jen

Western Music and Poetry Round-Up, 2026 Edition



The Greeters: Betsy and Bob

Two Days, Two Venues



Audience at the Moose



Brian Anderson performing. Pastor Rowland was at the pulpit later in the show, but not to do any preaching. Bryce Burnett is to the right; both poets are from Swift Current.



Al Young Performing (from Vulcan)



Poet Del Pratt from Oyen

The Afternoon Performers

There were 18 in all. Half a dozen call Medicine Hat home, others are from all over Alberta; most more than an hour's drive from here. Three came from Saskatchewan, the one from Spy Hill lives next to the Manitoba border. Half are singer/guitarists, half are poets, some do both and then there's the one who even adds drama to the mix. Their ages? Let's just say that most are past retirement age.

Emily Faye, youngest performer from Bindloss





Morley Thorpe came the furthest from Spy Hill,SK



Dave Loree from Nanton is performing; Noel Burles from Coalhurst behind him

Burning of the Brand & Evening Ceremony

A processional was the perfect way to give an official start to the evening show. In the lead was harmonica playing by Jen Zollner, to signify the fact that it was the most common instrument cowhands played on the historic cattle drives. The 2026 MH Rodeo Queen and Dunmore Equestrian Miss followed, carrying authentic branding irons. Jessica Schnell and Lorna Williams followed, each with official duties. Royalty branded the steerhead on stage and Jessica honoured Canada with our anthem. The poem written and recited by Lorna Williams was based on the powerful speech Grace Sippola gave at the Rodeo Queen competition in July, basically an understanding of what our western heritage encompasses. That's what we do through Cowboy Poetry: we talk about our western heritage, explain it, defend it, promote it and yes, many of us still live it.



Miss Josie Drake, Jen Zollner, Grace Sippola

The Procession





Lorna Williams from Medicine Hat



Ben Crane, The Headliner from Eckville

He came with an older van that he admits needs some work on the outside, but like his own body, he's sure it's still good enough to take him where he wants to go. In it he brought his wife, his wide array of merchandise, and his loads of talent for the evening show. The slideshows of his corny cartoon artwork went well with his songs and stories. Those that bought his merchandise were able to take his humour home with them.

Ben Crane Merchandise





The All-Day Two-Day Volunteers

For some volunteers, there was no rest for the weary. There are those doing performer registration/admission, and those selling memberships/merchandise. The MC is out front introducing everyone, cracking jokes and acknowledging the sponsors, while Noel, the backstage manager is making sure the performers are ready. There's someone looking after the sound (Jim and Myron Wenzel) and there's a roaming photographer getting it all on 'film' (Pam).

Penella, Evelyn, Sonja and more



Jack Humeny from Medicine Hat performing, behind him is Harv Speers (MC, Performer and Vice-President of MHCP)

The Food

Everybody gets hungry now and again. Save-On Food generously donated refreshments for the performers and volunteers. Thanks for the prepping, Pam. Jeff's (J & F Catering) beef was great on a bun, as were his salads, but it was the homemade apple pie that was a hit. Kabakula from Taber did the canteen. People were licking their fingers from the delicious but sticky, oversized cinnamon buns.



The Green Room, Sustenance



Apple Pies a Big Hit!

Raffle Winners

Ticket sales were brisk as folks decided which of the 15 item packages they would like to win.

Pat only bought 3 tickets for $5 and one of those tickets was picked out of the Round-Up

Raffle jar. She won stationary and greeting cards donated by Janet Sippola (mother of the MH Rodeo Queen) and a horse apron. The bird house was the biggest hit with the most tickets in the jar. Thanks for all the donations, to Jim for the woodworking items, to Bev Biggeman for the sewing, and to Val for overseeing the raffle fundraiser. Thanks to her helpers, too.



Two happy raffle winners are in the photo. Bill Skene won the hand-carved tree spirit donated by Phyllis Rathwell. A cell phone stand was also in his package. Miles couldn't stay for the evening show, so Bill delivered the Rapala Fishing Lure he won (donated by "Gone Fishing").



Bill Skene and Miles Tornberg, performers from Cochrane and Strathmore

Cowboy Gathering Enthusiasts

They came from as far as Cranbrook, BC, Saskatoon, SK and points in between. They are the ones who tend to occupy the front row seats, even if the venue is a church. The furthest audience member surprised our family when she made an appearance. She lives in Hay River, NWT, but had a work-related meeting in Edmonton on the same weekend as Medicine Hat's Western Music and Cowboy Round-Up.



Audience at the Saturday Evening Show



Surprise visit to her Gramma by Karli from Hay River, NWT!

Western Lingo

To scrap -to fight

Have a row -have a fight

To lam -to beat soundly

A Brush -a skirmish or fight

To clean his plow -to give a thorough whippin'

Fly at it -a fight (Cookie says this when his 'chuck' is ready to eat)

War Words:

War Horse or Battle Steed -typically large strong horses with good stamina. The first war horses were for heavily armed knights during the Middle Ages

Cavalry -group of soldiers who fight in war on horses

Drum Horses -originally in England are horses to carry kettledrum players and their

heavy 300 pound drums during processions

War Bag -where cowhands stored their meagre belonging, especially when on

a trail drive

War Bonnet -a headdress in Native American Culture worn by a warrior,

representing significant achievements he's made in battle

Morphine

During the American Civil War (1861-1865), morphine was heavily used for traumatic injuries and amputations. When the hypodermic needle was invented in the 1850's, morphine could be put directly into the bloodstream for immediate, powerful pain relief. The dependency from its widespread use was then known as "soldier's disease".

(The cattle drives started right after the Civil War. It was during the Cattle Drive era that cowhands started the Cowboy Poetry genre and it was the beginning of the cattle industry when the trail drives brought cattle into Canada in the late 1800's and early 1900's.)

War Hero, Princess Louise, Becomes a Canadian Citizen

Audio of the following poem:

Princess Louise was Italian born in 1944,
Became a Canadian hero in the Second World War.
She bravely helped Canadian soldiers liberate the Dutch,
But mostly she boosted humane morale with her presence and soft touch.
Her arrival in New Brunswick as a very special guest___
Meant that dignitaries and cameramen were all in their Sunday best.
She had come thousands of miles, 'cross the ocean it was said,
A crowd had gathered, was hushed to hear the proclamation read___
That this royal lady would hereinafter be a citizen of this land.
Free to roam in the hills and vales, whether distant or close at hand.
The military band began to play a patriotic tune,
The crowd of people cheered as she appeared that afternoon.
The children were let out of school that day, & of course their excitement grew,
They waved their flags and wildly cheered when the princess came into view.
She was escorted to the stage by the military guard,
Composed of veterans who returned, from war they had been scarred.

(Continued on next page)

Up the courthouse steps she walked, chestnut hair blow'n in the wind,

And looking down her long nose, I'm thinking that she grinned.

And then she saw the certificate, it was definitely oversized,

It needed an official stamp on it, so it could be authorized.

The imprint from her horseshoe was the official signature__

'Cause the princess was a filly, of that we can be sure.

She was given a shovel, a bag of oats and a fresh-cut bale of hay,

This procession was but the first, she'd have many more a-formal day.

Jen

Canada's Equine War Hero

The Americans and British aren't the only ones with a war hero that is a horse. Canada's Princess Louise served in the Second World War and has many medals to show for it. She has an interesting story of being rescued from sure death on the battlefield in Italy, smuggled in a truck of weapons to leave Italy and though illegal, finally managed to get to New Brunswick at the end of the war to unite with the 8th Hussar regiment that initially saved her. Caring for Princess Louise helped them cope with the awful days of war. Princess Louise became their mascot, the filly that took on star status marching in parades and saluted by the soldiers as she passed by. She became four-legged royalty, a celebrity in Europe as well as Canada, especially in New Brunswick where most of the boys in the Princess Louise 8th Hussar regiment were from.

Here is the link to the her incredible story: https://www.mhcowboylife.com/cowboy-stories/about-horses/princess-louise-canadas-equine-war-hero/



"Princess Louise," the mascot of the 8th Princess Louise's (New Brunswick) Hussars.
(Photo: Canada. Dept. of National Defence / Library and Archives Canada / PA-173657)

Note: The Hussars took the Princess Louise part of their name from the the 4th daughter of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Her full name was Princess Louise Caroline Alberta. She was wife of Canada's then Governor General John Campbell. While Alberta was still NorthWest Territories, he named the future province in his wife's honour. Lake Louise is also named after her, along with other regiments of the Canadian military.

Western Wisdom:

There's no peace to be found in a dog-eat-dog world.

Happy Trails,

Jen



Show us the newsletter has been "in your hands"

Let's Talk

What you thinkin'? You can make this a two-way conversation.

We can get lonely here not knowing what you have to say.

Don't want to keep receiving the newsletter? Just let us know. MHCPpresident@gmail.com